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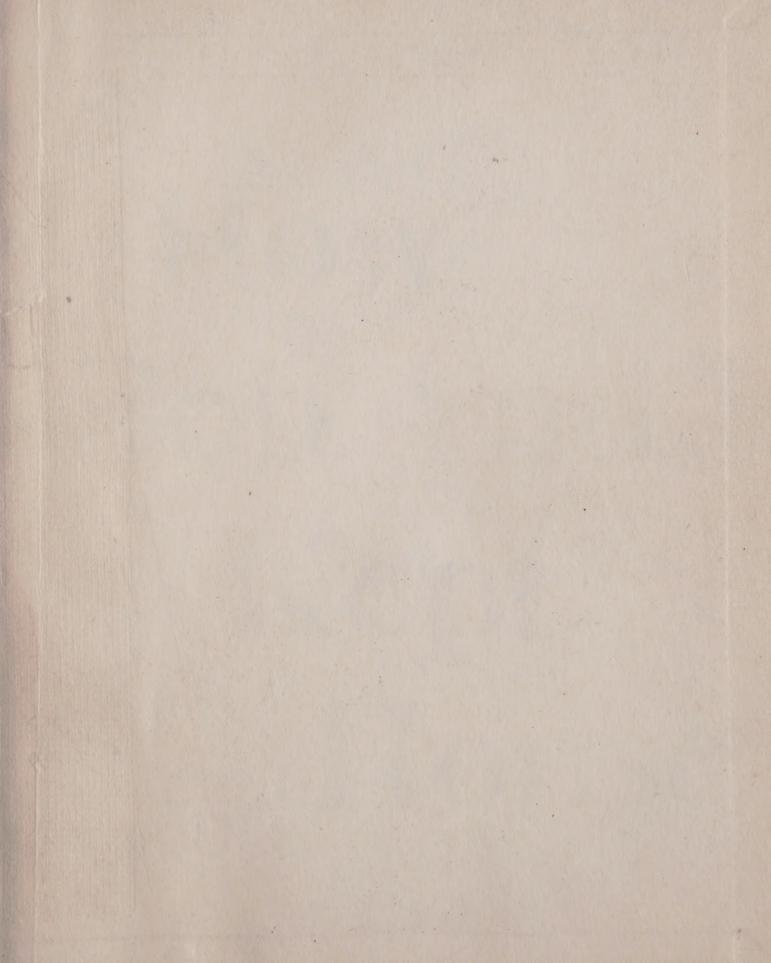


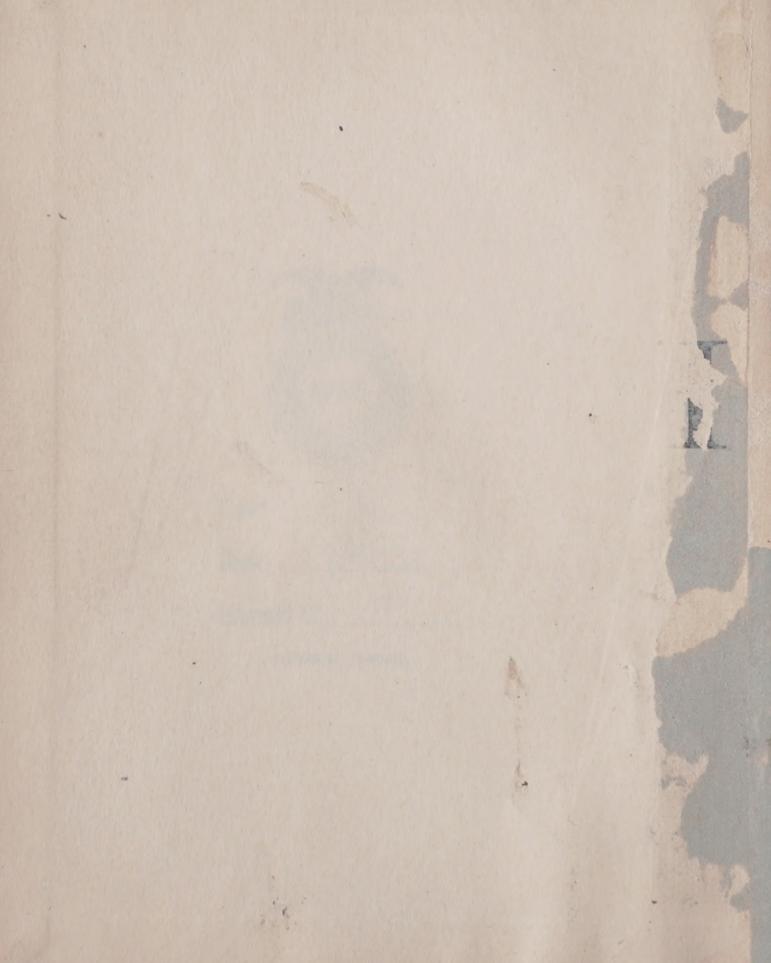
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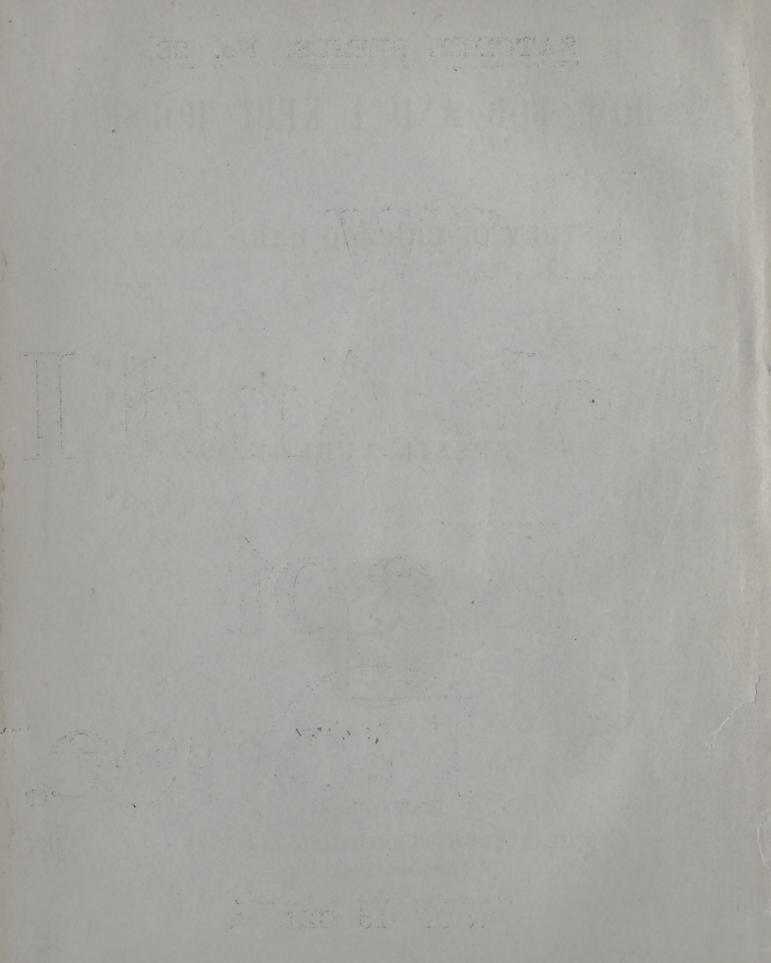




SATCHEL SERIES, No. 28. 2094

How Bob And I Kept House.

PRICE 15 CENTS.



# HOW BOB AND I KEPT HOUSE.

A STORY OF CHICAGO HARD TIMES.

BY

BESSIE ALBERT.

49 22



NEW YORK:

THE AUTHORS' PUBLISHING COMPANY, 27 BOND STREET.

[600]

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## PREFACE.

I PRESENT my plain little tale with a sort of misery-loves-company feeling, knowing that so many have gone through the unpleasant experience of having their "purple and fine linen" worn threadbare by the rapidity with which they have slipped down the icy hill of adversity. I trust not a few, and particularly those who "know how it is themselves," will be afforded a half-hour's pleasure in reading the true but old, old story.

B. A.

# HOW BOB AND I KEPT HOUSE.

## CHAPTER I.

THE WEDDING.

THE invitations read thus:-

THE HON. MR. AND MRS. RALPH R. WETHEROW

REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY

AT

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY OF THEIR DAUGHTER

#### LEONORA

AND

ROBERT AUGUSTUS MORTIMER,

Thursday, September 1st, 7 P. M.,

St. Philips Church.

The big cream-tinted, monogrammed envelope contained all the necessary accompanying cards:

THE HON. MR. AND MRS. RALPH R. WETHEROW Will Receive

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1st, FROM 8 TO 10 P. M., No. 8 Grand Abenue.

MR. AND MRS. ROBERT AUGUSTUS MORTIMER,
At Home

WEDNESDAYS AFTER DECEMBER 16th, Motel Le Bon Ton.

Last, but not least, the little "Please present at the Church."

All these were gotten up regardless of expense, and done in the most approved style of the artistic engraver, and ivory-tinted, cream-laid, satin-finish note paper and cardboard.

All the people of any standing in Chicago society among our acquaintances were honored with cards. Not a few presented the magic pasteboard at the church door. Everything was done in the most elaborate possible manner. Everybody was anxious to be present at what was without doubt the most elegant

and recherché wedding of the season. Such generous floral decorations had seldom been seen. The ladies' toilets were expensive beyond description. They vied with one another in the elegance of their attire. As the long line of carriages emptied their loads of velvets, satins, laces, and jewels at the carpetted and canopied door, it was a difficult task to decide which wore the richest garments, until I, the bride, leaning on the arm of my distinguished-looking papa, swept up the broad aisle, bringing up the rear of the long procession of six ushers, eight elegantly arrayed bridesmaids and groomsmen, and mamma in her black velvet and diamonds.

My stiff white satin eclipsed everything present, and glimmered and glistened beneath the cobweb of point lace, which enveloped the three yards of train, and fell in such folds as only Worth's tasteful hand can contrive. The immense solitaire diamond eardrops, necklace, pendant, bracelets, and butterfly fastenings for the veil (all the gift of the groom), shone and sparkled in the bright gaslight. It was a question which the young ladies envied the most—the diamond ornaments, or the handsome groom, who was attired after the most ultra fashionable style.

The ceremony over, we turned to leave the crowded

church, carrying with us the blessings of the Rev. Dr. Haughty, and an elegant ivory-covered prayer-book, the gift of the reverend gentleman.

We drove to father's mansion in our new twenty-five hundred dollar coupé, drawn by a span of blooded horses, the whole turnout, one of father's royal gifts—driver, groom and horses wearing wedding favors. The house was a perfect fairy land, with banks of flowers, and floods of light. The guests were even more brilliant than at the church.—The wedding supper all that a caterer's art could devise. The wine as choice in quality as it was generous in quantity. The presents were magnificent and varied in the extreme, including everything from a ten-acre lot, in the heart of the city, down to the proverbial salt-cellars.

The papers contained full accounts of the wedding and minute descriptions of my extensive imported ward-robe. Dresses, bonnets, cloaks, and wrappers were described, not forgetting the smallest particulars in regard to the quality of lace and embroidery on the many dozen sets of underwear.

And why all this gorgeousness? Was not I the only daughter of the Hon. Ralph R. Wetherow, the solid and wealthy retired merchant of Chicago, married

to Robert Augustus Mortimer, one of the most prominent real estate dealers in the west. He had amassed a larger fortune in real estate than any one man in the city. He was handsome, agreeable, affectionate, and only thirty-five. The man pleased me. The money pleased father and mother.

I was young, stylish, and rich—but youth and beauty were the requisite articles with Bob, money being no object to a millionnaire. Did not Robert possess an acre of land for every dollar father held in government bonds?

What more could our hearts desire, Health, wealth, and happiness already in our possession, and wisdom to come with increasing years. Who ever before set sail on the journey of life with their boat so freighted with matrimonial treasure. How was it possible that such a barque could be swamped, with strong arms at the helm, and trusting hearts somewhere covered up among the load of wordly goods, to act as ballast in case of storm.

Oh, what if the care of this wealth should distract our minds from the gathering clouds, and our newlytried boat should be tossed about on the angry waves, with loose sails and no anchor! but no such thought had a place in our giddy heads. Of course our vessel was seaworthy, and could be safely moored in any storm. No gale could change her course from that of peace and happiness. Certainly, we would drift down through life with all the *eclat* of the beginning.

But, alas, the uncertainty of life and Chicago real estate.

### CHAPTER II.

#### THE START UPON THE WEDDING TOUR.

We drove away from the gay throng at father's mansion, amid a shower of rice, old slippers, shoes, and all the other lucky things common to such occasions. I was delighted with this evidence of our friends' good wishes for our happiness; but Bob was disgusted, such demonstrations were absurd, and the *trash* would only break the windows and scratch our new carriage, or frighten the spirited horses.

We were met at the depot by all the attendants, including the ushers, father and mother, all of whom accompanied us to New York.

Of course we could not travel among the "common herd," so a palatial sleeping car was in readiness. Meals, including wines, were served in the coach—no expense was spared to render the trip the most delightful of the kind ever taken.

Everybody had such a perfectly lovely time, that they all regretted our arrival in New York, where, however, these friends were entertained in the very toniest of style.

After a week of uninterrupted gayety, we set sail for Europe.

We were wellnigh devoured with kisses, smothered with flowers, parting mementos, and keepsakes. My elegant travelling suit was, in danger of ruin with goodbye tears. Bob's shirt front and nobby scarf were greatly demoralized by the tearful embraces of dear mamma, in her anxiety to impress this new husband with the great responsibility he had undertaken, in the care of me. All this Bob bore with questionable politeness and fortitude. "Had he not crossed the ocean four times, and did anybody suppose he was such an idiot as not to be able to take care of one little woman as well as himself. He certainly should not have married without the ability to take care of a wife."

The first day out was spent in talking over the events of the past ten days. A retrospective view was most charmingly gratifying. Certainly, no bridal had ever been attended with such unprecedented success, not one thing occurring to mar the whole affair, not but two unpleasant days in the ten.

Our voyage promised to be as delightful as our

buoyant hearts could wish; but, alas! we were doomed to disappointment. The dizziness and whirls in my poor head, the consequence of the constant round of gayety, were making their last turns, and my giddy brain was experiencing something of its natural settled feeling.

But, horrors! the settling of my brain only unsettled my stomach. The second day out found me the sole and lonely occupant of our elegant state-room.

Of course a man like Bob was never seasick; no-body but foolish and delicate women would succumb to such a weakness. How I wished I had not come, as I lay regardless of dishevelled hair, careless of the wrinkles in my rose-colored dressing-gown, thinking of who would wear my elegant new clothes, and who would fall heir to my diamonds, when I died. Of course I would die, be wound up in a sheet, and be thrown overboard; and just then I did not care a straw, if I furnished food for the sharks. The one thing which distressed me the most, was Bob's fresh, bright face, every few minutes, thrust in the half-open door, with the inquiry, "How do you feel now?"

But the fourth day out, the face appeared less frequently, and had lost much of its brilliant color. At last Bob came in hastily, closed the door with a sudden

bang. The sparkle had left his eye, the roses had deserted his cheeks, the features were pale and drawn.

The other berth had an occupant! Need I say, that this circumstance afforded me more pleasure than anything which had happened since we left home.

Between the alarming lurches of the steamer, Bob would stop, swearing long enough to discuss the great impropriety of second marriages, and wonder if widow's weeds would be becoming to me, and if his will was drawn up properly. The end came. Two more forlorn people never tried to assist one another to put the travelling paraphernalia in order for landing, and a more delighted couple never set foot upon shore.

Bob was all right after a few hours on terra firma, but it was many days before I could convince myself, that I was not swinging somewhere between the top and the bottom of the ocean with the great waves breaking about me. But rest was out of the question, we must be at home before the Christmas holidays and winter gayeties, and all the sight-seeing possible was to be crowded into the three months. So we immediately set about the work of laying out plans. Few travellers ever made better use of time, than we did of that three months.

## CHAPTER III.

#### THE EUROPEAN TOUR.

In the tour of Great Britain, we visited the manufactories, the lovely lakes, the castles, squares, parks, churches, cathedrals, docks, museums, gardens, picture galleries, public and private, palaces, public buildings and institutions, and all the places of historic interest.

In Paris, we were charmed. The boulevards, the imperial palaces, libraries, galleries, statues, street sights, and shopping, occupied our time during the day. At night the hours passed on "fleeting wing," at the grand theatres and operas, not forgetting the Jardin Mabile. We took in all the most interesting towns in the environs of the city, and then rushed over the remaining part of France and Belgium prescribed by the most reliable guide-books. We hurried through Holland, with its checker-board of canals, and its quaint Dutch cottages kept bright and clean by the native female scrubbers. The many pictures by old Dutch masters, and the "T Huis in't Bosch," the

cozy, but nevertheless lonely home of the then living Queen of Holland, all came in for their share of admiration.

In Germany we loitered more slowly through the grand picture and sculpture galleries.

At Berlin we admired the palaces on the beautiful "Unter den Linden," where the wealth and fashion of the city display themselves and the splendor of their equipages.

A stay at Dresden, noted for its superb pictures and far-famed china, and another stop at Leipsic, the paradise of book-worms and university students, who cherish a fond memory for the wine-cellar where Mephistophiles and Doctor Faustus were presiding spirits, and from which Goethe drew a scene in familiar Faust, and a few days at other smaller towns, was time most delightfully spent.

We drank Bavarian beer in Munich and the salty spring waters at Baden-Baden, and feasted our eyes on the lovely scenery of the Rhine. Who that has seen those acres of grape-vines, does not have a longing for the wine made from the products of the vineyards?

In Switzerland, we visited the picturesque lakes; bought clocks and music-boxes at Geneva, but declined to make the various trips that require mules or donkeys for means of conveyance.

In Austria, Vienna was found most eminently enjoyable. We viewed, with republican eyes, the rich nobility, and our ears were charmed with the music of the genial and merry Viennese. We looked with awe upon the historic antiquities preserved in the museums with religious relics. Among the latter we saw the table-cloth used at the last supper, and the tooth of John the Baptist.

In Italy, we rode the water-streets of Venice, and gazed in admiring wonderment upon the palaces of Genoa, the beautiful villas and churches, remarkable for their architectural beauty and interior decorations, not omitting the grand works of art found at fair Florence.

In Rome, we paid flying visits to ruins, the tombs, the Vatican, and spacious halls, containing magnificent works of brush and chisel, regretting all the while that our time was so limited.

Naples and the surrounding points of interest, including Vesuvius Pompeii, and Herculaneum were visited.

At all places of note we made purchases of arti-

cles peculiar to the locality, and when the time came to sail for home, our luggage was something prodigious. Having the embellishment of our home constantly in view, we passed by nothing in the way of ornaments that could be properly shipped, which taste desired and money could purchase. We left orders for valuable paintings, bronze and marble statuary, rare pieces of furniture and choice wines. Our large pile of boxes and trunks were crammed with cloths, laces, jewelry, household linen, mosaics, and numberless choice knick-knacks and gems in endless variety for gifts, as well as our own use.

When all these treasures were unpacked and spread out in father's spacious dining-room, mother decided that the collection, as far as quantity, beauty, and value were concerned, bore a nearer resemblance to the superb offerings brought by the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon, than anything she could imagine.

Our friends were apparently as delighted to see us as they were pleased with their costly gifts. Their welcoming embraces were as loving, ardent, and cheering as their good-bye kisses had been tearful and sorrowful.

But their joy was nothing when compared to ours.

It was downright bliss, to be where one could walk about without danger of having ones brains dashed out against intervening objects, and where meals could be kept in the "desired position."

If the outgoing voyage had been unpleasant and rough, what can I say of the return trip. Old Pluto was assisting his enemy Neptune in making fires to keep warm for the coming winter, for the ocean heaved and surged, and our steamer was tossed about like a straw on the mammoth boiling caldron.

So ended our long bridal tour. Subtracting the few never-to-be-forgotten, wretched days at sea, the remainder of the three months was all pleasant, profitable enjoyment, and will ever be the brightest oasis in the Great Sahara of our life.

## CHAPTER IV.

OUR EXPERIENCE AT THE HOTEL "LE BON TON."

A REST of a few days at father's, and then we took possession of our rooms, previously engaged, at the hotel "Le Bon Ton." We had the most eligible and desirable apartments in the house, with a pleasant outlook and elegantly fitted. When our ornaments, wedding gifts, and valuable articles of vertu were artistically placed, the suite (six in number exclusive of bath-room) was the admiration of all beholders, besides being a most admirable place to display my superb imported toilettes.

Bob had his valet; I my maids, coachman, and carriage. Altogether we expected to live far more satisfactory than hotel boarders usually do. The table was without fault, the attendance perfect, the clerks gentlemanly; in short everything was beyond criticism. We had hosts of visits from friends outside of the hotel, and several who lived in the house, for the guests of "Le Bon Ton" were above the common run,

and very agreeable people. But like all hotels there were some who made a business of minding everybody's affairs, and leaving their own at loose ends. I sometimes think these sort of people have no personal matters to attend to, or they certainly could not occupy all their time with other people's concerns.

There were four ladies in the house, so overburdened with curiosity, that they never rested day or night, until they forced themselves into our apartments. They held consultations upon the propriety of calling, when they had not received wedding-cards. However, curiosity got the better of good manners (if they ever had any), and they came in pairs, took notes, and then compared results in a body.

"We were the most delightful people they had ever known, and entertained in princely style. It was very evident that we had always lived in luxury." These parvenus thought Bob was a "perfect gentleman, such an acquisition to the hotel society, and I a most perfect lady," until they discerned that we had not the slightest intention of either returning their calls or cultivating their acquaintance farther than a passing bow.

What a storm of abuse they let fall upon our defenceless heads.

"Our rooms were furnished in the most wretched taste, and we decidedly shoddy. My garments were loud, over-trimmed, and common (notwithstanding which they had endeavored to make cheap copies of several). I was rude and too gay for a respectable lady. I was idle and lazy, and pretended I did not know how to do anything, when I had been 'raised to work.' Some of their mothers' aunts' sisters' daughters had lived near to my grandmother, who took in washing for a living, and I was the very little barefoot girl who carried home the clothes, begged for something to eat, and sat by the stove in the kitchen of this mother's aunt's sister's daughter. My grandmother finally died in the poorhouse, and I was sent to an orphan asylum, so that mother could go out to work; and this Mr. Wetherow was not my father at all; nobody knew who he was, not even mother herself. She had been a chambermaid in a hotel, and father had married her because—he had to."

"Bob was overbearing, coarse, too fond of his champagne for dinner, as everybody knew, and we already lived like cats and dogs, because he was just beginning to find out the *scandal* about mother and me. He came in for his full share of admiration. Everybody

had always known that he was a newsboy in California, and somebody had taken pity on him and employed him to run errands. He had rewarded them for their kindness by appropriating 'ever so much' money and running off; that was just how he got his start. Some one of these nice ladies had an aunt who had a cousin, who had a sister, who had married the man who lived neighbor to the brother of the man whose father had picked Bob out of the gutter. There could be no possible doubt about the truth of the story, for it came so direct." Their final decision was that we were "nobody, anyhow, and they were all so sorry they had called, and were dreadfully afraid we would return their visits. Of course none of them intended to be at home when we sent our cards."

All of this idle talk did not interfere with our happiness in the least, and made not the slightest impression. We were perfectly well aware that we had descended from good old aristocratic stock, and the blood in our veins was of too good a quality to be inflamed by the silly chatter of a few ignorant, envious women, who injured themselves tenfold more than us.

The silent contempt with which we treated these scandal-mongers only incensed them the more, so when

they found we had concluded to go to housekeeping, they said we were forced to leave the hotel because we had not paid a cent of board since we had lived there, and the proprietor had notified us that our rooms were for rent, to all of which we paid little or no attention. Bob was a trifle nettled, however, when they dared make assertions about nonpayment.

We were engrossed in the extensive preparations for housekeeping. Two months of hotel life was a surfeit for Bob, and he grew restless, uneasy, and determined to have a home of his own, *immediately*. We were too impatient to wait to build, as had been our first intention.

We lost no time in closing the bargain for a large and handsome stone-front just erected, for which Bob paid a fabulous price. Remodelling, to suit our fastidious taste, was necessary. While an army of workmen made all possible haste with the interior decorations, we ordered the furniture and upholstery. These, added to our European purchases, were elegant enough in quality and extensive in quantity, requisite for a queen.

I employed three or four seamstresses to make and embroider bedding, table linen, and the various other fancy things of lace and floss, zephyr and canvas, which go toward making any home attractive. My time was too much occupied with visitors and visiting, to spare a moment to give to the use of the needle.

When all the arrangements were near completion it was astonishing how disgusted we were with everything in and about the "Le Bon Ton." The house furniture was common and rusty, the waiters inattentive, the office clerks insolent and ungentlemanly, the table insufferable, the gossipping women unbearable,—we could not understand how we had borne all these discomforts so long.

Thus what had pleased us so well three months ago, was now so distasteful, that overjoyed was not too strong a term for our feelings when our home was completed and ready for occupancy.

## CHAPTER V.

#### OUR HOME.

At last everything was finished and in order, from the anti-moth cedar closet in the mansard, to the rat-proof, concrete-cemented cellar in the basement. Not the smallest thing had been omitted or forgotten which the fertile brain of house-finishers and furnishers could suggest and our inexhaustible purse could purchase.

Bob decided that it would be appropriate to take possession the first day of the month, the first day of the week, and make the first meal—breakfast.

The servants, eight in number, were engaged, and in charge of their respective departments. On the first of March we drove to our home. It was in a blaze of light, as warm as June, and gorgeous as a fairy queen's palace.

The artistic front door, ornamented with a goodsized silver plate, bearing in large letters "Mortimer," was swung open by the liveried footmen. We stepped over the marble-floored vestibule and walked into the spacious hall, with its tessellated floor, marble wainscoating, and brilliant with Persian rugs, crystal chandeliers and mirrors.

We were conscious of very pardonable pride in being master and mistress of so enchanting an establishment.

Our parlors were perfectly exquisite, one in pink and blue satin, the other in lavender and gold with delicately colored moquette carpets and real lace drapery, relieved by ivory-inlaid ebony finishings exactly matching the frames of the furniture.

The library was luxuriant with convenient tables, Queen Ann easy chairs and lounges, in which we could enjoy the rare volumes which filled the massive bookcases.

The blazing fire in the open fireplace gave a cheerful look of comfort to the dark Persian colors in the raw-silk coverings of the sitting-room, which was greatly heightened in effect by the crimson carpeting and frescoed walls. This room was our pet, and was rendered all the more charming by the conservatory which opened from it with glass doors.

The dining-room was quaint and elegant in East-

lake style, with inlaid floors, rich Turkish rugs, and heavily panelled wainscoating.

Bob's smoking-room was arranged to his own taste, in dark green enamelled leather with plenty of comfortable chairs, foot-rests, smoking fixings of all descriptions, and small open fireplace.

The bric à brac and music rooms were cozy little apartments adjoining the library. The bric à brac room was a perfect old curiosity shop, with a large painting of Little Nell and her grandfather, the work of one of the most eminent artists, adorning the mantel. The valuable curiosities gathered in Europe showed to striking advantage against the dark colored walls, with mediæval borders. The floor was covered with a rug of harmonizing colors.

The music-room had been a sort of "bone of contention" between us. Bob thought red would be the best color. I said red would burn anybody up when they performed, and pale green would be pretty. Bob said that would freeze anyone who attempted to be musical. After much discussion we selected satin, with bright birds, butterflies, and flowers in their natural colors, scattered over a black ground with pleasing effect; the design being beautifully appropriate to music.

Above-stairs nothing had been forgotten that would add to beauty, effect, and convenience. Our room was, then, a novelty. All the belongings were in Japanese design, and were purchased abroad. The walls were frescoed in imitation bamboo, with butterflies, caterpillers and cobwebs intermingled so artistically, as to seem so real that sensitive people shuddered.

The furniture was inlaid after the "tea-box style," and upholstered in blue and black satin. Everything in the apartment, from the smallest match-box to the antique lamp-shaped blue porcelain chandelier and the quaintly embroidered silk bedspread and pillow-shams, were thoroughly Japanese.

Bob's dressing-room was a perfect model, with its marble lavatory, mirrors, dressing-table, chest of drawers, which vied with mine in perfumery and toilet articles.

The other four bedrooms, which were intended to be kept filled with guests, were furnished in the most tasteful manner, and contained baths and all other modern conveniences. The largest one in scarlet, the other in pale green, and the smaller two, a trifle less elaborate. The first in purple plush, and the second in brown velvet. All with everything an exact match, or

as one of the hotel gossips expressed it, "Everything in corresponding."

The dancing and billiard rooms, with mansard roof, were perfect, and all ready for use, even to the waxing of the floor of the former, and the placing of the chalk of the latter.

The kitchen, laundry, larder, servants' room, sewing-room, steam apparatus, drying-rooms, store-rooms, and wine cellar, in the basement, contained every known convenience and contrivance to lighten household labor and to assist culinary workers in concocting the most delicious viands with which to tempt human appetite.

One room, during the entire preparation, had been under lock and key, and proved to be one of Bob's extravagances. He said it was a "store-room for his treasures," and I supposed it was the safe-room, very appropriately placed next to ours; but when I saw the vaults in the dining-room, I gave up guessing.

After we had made a thorough tour of the house, satisfied ourselves that not one of the endless number of elegant pictures was improperly hung, or an ornament had been left out or misplaced, and I had glanced in every mirror to admire the hang of my train as well as Bob's handsome face and figure (I do believe I have

forgotten to mention that my liege lord was very handsome), we seated ourselves before the fireplace of the
elegant sitting-room, I wondering what could be in the
little room next to ours. Maybe it might be a picture
of his first wife, of whom he had never before spoken—
what if it should be.

As I sat gazing into the bright fire, Bob drew his chair close to mine, and asked—

"Lee—are you satisfied with everything—is there anything else you would desire?"

I hesitated a little, and then threw my arms about his neck and most smothered him with kisses.

"Everything was just grand from beginning to end, everything heart could desire is to be found, but—what—was in the little room?"

Bob gave me a good hug and a fearful squeeze, and pressed me to his heart, after the most approved high art novel style, and said, "Come with me, and I will show you."

I flew rather than walked up the steps. Bob turned the key in the door. Swung it wide open. We stood in a room—surpassing all the others in marvellous beauty.

"What is it for ?" was my question.

"Your boudoir—the store-room for my treasure," was Bob's answer.

I looked about in admiration and amazement. The walls were hung in pink silk, overlaid with pleated white lace; the carpet in the daintiest pattern of pink roses and buds, on a white ground.

The furniture consisted of the prettiest writing-desk filled with writing materials of every description; the most convenient and complete workstand, the most graceful flower stands, bookracks; hanging shelves, and a pair of jardinières filled with growing plants. The dressing-table was a marvel of beauty, loaded with perfumes, powders, and cosmetics, in exquisite bottles and a satin-lined case, containing all sorts and sizes of ivory-handled brushes and combs ornamented with my monogram. The couches, lounging chairs, and footstools were made of satin and inlaid with ivory, upon which were medallions painted in bright colors. The furniture covering was pink silk terry, as was also the hanging to the cosy bay-window.

Parian statuary, rose-colored vases and ornaments, were placed upon a unique cabinet as well as upon the tables and shelves.

But the crowning feature was a marble bust of

Bob, standing upon a white onyx pedestal, in one corner of the room. It was an exact likeness and stood out in bold relief against the pink walls, as did the pictures of mother, father, and Bob.

The whole effect of the room was bewildering, as the light blazed from the delicately wrought chandelier, which sprang from the centre of the large mirror, over the dressing-table.

I was so delighted as well as astonished, that I looked at Bob, then at the superb room, and without speaking one word of thanks I fell into one of the soft pink chairs and treated Bob to a sensational scene by my expressing my gratitude in a flood of tears. Just what any other silly, weak woman would have done.

A moment's weeping, however, loosened my tongue, and I poured forth my thanks and admiration to the entire and unqualified satisfaction of Bob, who was as highly pleased with his work, as I was charmed with the grand result.

I promised that when I got one of my tantrums (which, unfortunately, I very often did), I would repair to this room, rest and muse until the tempest had passed.

I kept my word. The hours spent in this little room were the source of great comfort and consolation, and did much to lessen the trials and disappointment of after life.

We slept that night, feeling that our new home was just what we had intended it to be, a great success. We intended to enjoy it to our hearts' content. Why should we not? Did we not possess wealth sufficient to live just as pleased us best? Did we not have hosts of friends to assist in enjoying it with us?

Wealth and friends go hand in hand. Money is very productive of friendship, but when the worldly goods take flight, it is really amazing with what rapidity these firm friends spread their wings and follow in the wake of vanishing possessions.

# CHAPTER VI.

THE EXQUISITE PLEASURE OF PRESIDING OVER OUR OWN CHINA AND SILVER.

Our first breakfast was all we could desire. The decorated china, silver, table-cloth and napkins, were simply superb.

Oranges never were sweeter, the smelts were a tempting brown, the porter-house was done to a turn, the saratogas just crisp enough, the muffins delicious, and the waffles delicate and tender.

Bob thought he never detected the fine flavor of his wine until he sipped it from one of our handsomely cut breakfast wine-glasses. I was confident coffee never was more beautifully clear than when it poured from the mouth of my solid silver urn.

We felt confident that we surely had a cook competent to serve an excellent breakfast, if nothing more.

Bob looked pleased and satisfied, not to mention handsome, as he sat opposite to me at the head of our own table. I felt it was no flattery when he declared that I never looked better than I did in my soft pearl gray wrapper, beautifully embroidered in bright colored flowers and vines, finished with lace at neck and hands, with a jaunty breakfast cap to match. This was one of my most elaborate morning imported toilets, and had been selected for the occasion with an "eye to business." You see the colors would harmonize with the furnishing of every room in the house, and I expected, that first day, to show the whole establishment to mother and father and various other visitors. I did not propose to show to disadvantage myself, or have the colors of any room killed by too gay ones in my dress, or the dress in turn ruined by the bright rooms—hence the gray.

The lunch and dinner of the first day were triumphs; only initials of a long list of brilliant entertainments, which followed in quick succession.

Our invitations were nearly all accepted, for our parties were proverbially successful in every particular.

Our germans were noted for excellent music novelty and elegance of the favors.

Our card and billiard parties were always socially jolly, our teas were remarkably agreeable, and our dinners surpassed all other fêtes in sumptuousness.

Rare viands were elegantly served, without the usual stiffness and frigidness of dinner companies. Besides, Bob was famous for his fine brands of wine, our lunches were something entirely out of the usual line of such spreads. In fact, the frequency, lavish elegance and generosity with which we dispensed our hospitality, were the cause of much comment and high praise among those favored with invitations, and the source of as much jealousy and rude, ill-timed remarks among the uninvited; particularly the hotel gossips. They found some congenial friends in our immediate neighborhood, and through them they spread such information as could be gleaned from the kitchen and servants, of the doings in our house, far and wide, with all the extra additions such people are usually in the habit of making.

Only once, however, did any of them have occasion to satisfy their curiosity by gaining entrance into the house. This was in June, on the occasion of a hospital benefit, in the way of an evening fête, given at the request of our minister and the lady managers of the hospital. Bob was well known as a benefactor, and a noble giver to charity. On this occasion he not only opened his house, but illuminated the grounds

and insisted upon donating the music and necessary refreshments. The managers issued invitations, and charged a reasonably high price, to prevent too large a crowd. However, the price made very little difference, for the event only afforded an opportunity for prying people to satiate their indomitable curiosity. They came in swarms and pervaded and overflowed the whole premises, crowded and inconvenienced our friends, whom we most desired to receive. They came early and staid late, in fear of not examining the minutest objects of interest.

Bob and I bore the intrusions with becoming patience, for sweet charity's sake.

We were incensed when we heard how the scandal-mongers opened their batteries and gave us a broad-side. They were astonished beyond anything to see "what perfectly courteous and graceful manners Bob possessed. How in the world a "poor boy" like he ever learned to be a gentleman. How did I ever learn to be so pleasant and agreeable. Surely my father must have been "a somebody," for I never got it from my mother's side, or maybe they trained me well in the orphan asylum. Such a supper their eyes never beheld, and such delicacies they never before

put into their mouths." All of which we concluded was true to the letter, for they stared, opened doors, asked questions of the servants, examined everything, and literally gorged themselves with good things at the table.

They had evidently come with the determination of getting their ticket money back at the table.

I was so disgusted that I inwardly hoped the whole set would have an attack of bilious colic before morning.

Notwithstanding the great financial sweep of the affair, we made one decision, that was, to never again donate the use of our house for charity.

It required a week's labor to get the household machinery again in proper running order, so that we could go on with our usual festivities, which were continued until July. Then we closed the shutters, drew down the shades, locked the silver in the vault, the china in the closets, and made a four weeks' visit to the sea-shore, where we could rest, by foregoing the the pleasure of presiding over our establishment.

#### CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES IN HONOR OF THE SON AND HEIR
TO OUR VALUABLE REAL ESTATE.

It is scarcely necessary to enlarge upon the brilliancy of our stay at the sea-shore—suffice to say that Bob would not permit the wife of a "Chicago real estate millionnaire" to appear in any way inferior to anybody at the hotel.

My diamonds and jewels were large in size, fine in quality, and shone with conspicuous brightness. My toilets were numerous, stylish, expensive; my maid understood the art of hair-dressing to perfection, which added no little to the general effect.

Bob's tailor had studied to display his nobby garments to great advantage on Bob's handsome figure. Taking both together we presented a very decided, distinguished, and attractive appearance, and made as fine a show as anyone on exhibition. This added no little to the pleasure of our visit, for both men and women

enjoy everything better, and feel more at ease, when conscious of being well dressed.

After our return we did not open our doors to society generally, but a few of our more intimate personal friends were frequent and informal guests at our social board.

In the past year, much of our time had been consumed in giving enjoyment to others, but now I was occupied in—to me—a far more pleasurable amusement.

My seamstress, assisted by a professional needle-woman, were busy at work in the sewing-room with closed doors. I sat with them, in the midst of piles of fleecy lace, shear muslin, fine linen cambric and soft flannels. When dexterous fingers had puffed and tucked these dainty materials into tiny little garments, fit for a fairy, they were carefully folded away in a miniature chest of drawers which stood in a room adjoining our own. Much of the massive furniture had been banished to the attic to make place for the easy rocking-chairs, peculiar baskets, clothes-racks, and last but not least, an elaborate silk and lace trimmed cradle.

In short our house had need of an additional room—a nursery.

The arrival, on the first of December, of a son and

heir to our valuable real estate was the signal for renewed festivities. Cards were issued announcing the important fact, thus:

#### BORN TO

## LEONORA AND ROBERT A. MORTIMER,

#### A Son,

## December 1st, 18—.

While we smothered the poor little thing in embroidered blankets, and scorched his little feet by the open fire, filled his diminutive stomach with anise and chamomile teas, to keep his screams from being heard below-stairs, Bob was receiving the congratulations of his friends in the Eastlake dining-room. They ably assisted him in disposing of sumptuous lunches, and sampling his fine old wines.

Gifts of all descriptions poured in upon the little innocent. Silver cups, rattles, lockets, rings, neck-chains, silver knives, forks, spoons, plates, napkin-rings, toys, and clothes—every kind of article ornamental and useful were received.

Our dearest friends received invitations to a most

sumptuous Christmas dinner given in honor of the son and heir.

On New Year's day I was the recipient of congratulations from a select party of visitors.

Immediately after the holidays, the first important event was the christening.

This rite should have been performed sooner, but the christening robe was delayed on the way from Paris. Certainly "our boy" could not be carried to church in an ordinary dress. The robe was pronounced exquisite in beauty. It was a mass of the finest point-lace, the delicate texture and pattern beautifully brought out, and a pale blue silk slip.

The boy was given his father's name, and was conceded the best behaved, the most beautiful, and most wonderfully smart child ever known.

All this flattery pleased us amazingly; we were quite ready to think it real truth.

All our time not occupied with entertaining was fully taken up, noting his daily improvements and watching his health. Like all new parents, we expected to see him go into convulsions every time he turned up his eyes, or stretched open his tiny hands. We made haste to summon a family physician when-

ever he gaped or was attacked with the hiccups— Nevertheless, Bob and I were perfectly happy, and very properly extremely proud of our firstborn, who waxed stronger and grew in beauty each day.

Why should he not be a child of fortune and fame, when he was, to all present appearances, "born with a silver spoon in his mouth."

#### CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE TOP OF THE HILL. A SUDDEN CURVE BRINGS THE DOWN GRADE IN SIGHT.

Now we were in reality on the very top of the hill, which we had reached with rapid strides, with little or no exertion on our part. Here we fully expected to remain in the midst of our luxurious comforts the remainder of our lives.

We looked with contempt over the shady side of the hill, upon the well beaten path visible in the dim distance. It was worn smooth by constant use, and led directly to the bottom. Certainly our well shod feet had too firm a hold on the very summit to ever step on the slippery path, upon which so many unfortunates have fallen.

The "greatest fire on record" had swept away pretty much everything of any value, but real estate, and sent that away up to a fabulous price, far beyond the expectations of the most sanguine.

Father, so well aware of Bob's prosperity, and fol-

lowing his advice, was satisfied there was "millions in it." He therefore converted his government bonds into real estate. He was governed by Bob's judgment, and bought twice as much as he had ready cash to pay for. He filed away his deeds with the most comfortable feelings. Surely he had something now fire could not burn. "Nothing short of an earthquake" could deprive him of these possessions.

This property must be improved for the welfare of the city. So New York, Boston, and the United States mortgage companies were consulted. Of course these loans would only be for a year, the income in rents would be simply enormous, and in a year or so the ground and buildings would be clear.

Everything was taken into consideration but the uncertainty of human events.

Presently the panic struck in the midst of our half built but well mortgaged city.

It was like a bombshell shot from a two-hundred pounder. Its bursting was like an eruption from Vesuvius. It swallowed up everything within reach, and, with the fragments scattered far and wide, carried ruin and desolation with them.

Without doubt we were so high above all others

on the very pinnacle of success, that none of these annihilating missiles would strike us, as they did the less fortunate who were only half way up the hillside.

Bob and father looked around among the wrecks, to ascertain who were injured, and in their endeavors to assist others, they discovered, to their utter amazement, that they had not escaped unhurt.

Bob thought it of no moment; "this scare would soon blow over, and when the smoke cleared away, people would find they were more frightened than injured."

Bob kept up his spirits, and we still went on in the same booming style.

We made no change whatever in our way of living, nor the slightest retrenchment. All our friends talked of economy and a more quiet way of keeping house. But Bob scorned all such notions.

"All this sort of talk was woman's chatter. There was not the slightest necessity for any fears for the future; everything would come out all right, and business would be, if anything, better than before the fire. Real estate was bound to command high prices."

Father's good judgment was getting the better of

his rashness, and he took a more sober view of matters. His face wore a perplexed and puzzled look.

It was becoming very evident that the tremendous shock of the bursting panic-shell had so shaken the solid foundation of our fortune, that its situation was materially changed, and we were left in a comparatively shaky condition.

Had we been possessed of sufficient courage to have looked ahead, we would have discovered that there was a certain curve in the road we were travelling which, once passed, brought us on the down grade. But, blinded by our past success, we had steamed on at the highest speed, without either noticing the danger signals or whistling down the brakes, until care and caution were of no avail.

# CHAPTER IX.

THE STRUGGLE TO LIVE UPON THE INCOME OF MORTGAGED REAL ESTATE.

The summer was ended, the harvest was over, and we were not safe.

As the fall passed and the winter approached, the effects of the panic were more severely felt.

Bob began to talk a little more of retrenchment and economy. I noticed he gave fewer dinners and evening entertainments. We went less to theatres and operas. He was gloomy and moody, and read his evening paper in silence.

Father and he were frequently closeted with lawyers for hours at a time. I was much taken up with the boy, but, nevertheless, could not help remarking how often I was required to sign papers, the contents of which I knew nothing.

I never was considered a "business woman," and therefore nothing was explained. If I asked any questions, I was simply told that "I would not understand such things."

I at last did understand, however, that Bob had applied "healing plasters" to the gashes and slits in our possessions, until there was no available space to continue applications.

All winter Bob kept up his pluck, and insisted that by spring things were bound to be "all right." "If we could hold on a little longer, everything would go higher than ever before, and it would turn out just as he predicted."

He might weather through the storm if he had something more to mortgage. So my "ten-acre wedding gift" was proffered, accepted, mortgaged, and followed in the march of all the rest on the road to the sheriff.

At last, we decided to live with a trifle less expense. We first discharged the butler, and then Bob's valet was considered superfluous—the coachman could black the boots and attend to the fire.

Then I spent several hours in quiet thought in my pink boudoir, and finally concluded I would deprive myself of my maid. At that time I considered I was doing a most magnanimous act, but if Bob could live without a valet I certainly could get along without a maid.

These changes reduced our expenses very materially, yet every department seemed to go on in the same orderly manner.

I was astonished to find how pleasant it was to take out and fold away one's own clothes, and how easy it was to do one's own hair.

We thought best not to give any large parties this season, but Bob had a few "cronies," as he called them, who had learned that the wine cellar was not yet empty and Bob's cigar-case always full. They made it convenient to spend the evening very often; just was going by and dropped in to talk over the situation—and they might have added—drink Bob's good wine.

During these visits I heard so much about land, mortgages, deeds, foreclosures, and so on, that I would get everything tangled and confused, and would leave them discussing beside the bright fire in the handsome library. I would slip off to my little "haven of rest," and would try to think how we could live in plainer style, and what I should do without horses and carriages.

One day Bob came in great haste and asked what I

Of course I consented. Down went the necessary signature, and down went my heart to the lowest depths, for I knew now the last piece of property was gone. Foreclosure after foreclosure had been made, and yet the amount did not cover the encumbrances, so my wedding gift and now our elegant home must go to make up the deficiencies.

I again repaired to my pink boudoir, and after spending several hours in tears and thought, principally the former, I, screwing my courage to the sticking point, determined to immediately give up my horses, carriage, and coachman, and thus cut off the expenses in the barn.

The baby and I had not much sewing, and I thought best to secure another place for my seamstress. This left us with four servants, and our stunning style could not be kept up with the revenue of mortgages for our income. Therefore, we shut up the pink and blue and lavender and gold drawing-rooms, and used the sitting-room or library to entertain the few friends who visited us. Alas! these visits were of the ultra angelic order, for it had now become generally known that we had nothing left but our encumbered home.

Fashionable people have a perfect horror of calling at a house where they were accustomed to be ushered into the spacious drawing-rooms by a well-mannered, liveried waiter with silver salver in hand, and go through the ordeal of being invited to walk past the doors closing in so much gorgeousness. It is more than their sensitive nerves can bear, to ask after the health of your family in the library, when they are well aware that they are deprived the pleasure of sitting on the ebony and satin chairs because you are "too poor" to keep some one to sweep and dust the apartment they occupy.

A few of such calls left me in a fit of shivers. The whole house felt as if a "Manitoba wave" had suddenly swept in along with the velvet and silk trains. So the calls lessened every day, much to my relief, for I well knew many of the visitors came just to see how I looked and how I "took it." They would go away and wonder why father did not help us out. "He always was close, anyhow." Ah! how little they knew.

It was a clear case of Jack and Jill who went up the hill to fetch a pail of water, Jack fell down and broke his crown and Jill came tumbling after. "Now, Jill up did get and home did trot,
As fast as he could caper,
And dame Jill had a job, to plaster his knob,
With vinegar and brown paper."

Poor Bob was the Jack, and I being the Jill possessed "no vinegar and brown paper" to use in remedying the mischief of the fall. And dear father had none to give us. His investments were even more disastrous than Bob's, and had not my princely wedding gifts been taken up by the great cyclone of hard times, and carried away where the "woodbine twineth?"

## CHAPTER X.

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HILL. OUR HOME GOING.

It was the first of March, the second anniversary of our "going to housekeeping."

But what terrible changes two short years have brought, what a difference between the then and now.

That morning Bob and I were a sort of mutual admiration society. Bob thought I looked charming, presiding over the decorative cups and saucers and silver urn. I never had seen Bob look so well as he did, when handling the pearl-handled carving knife. That morning we both agreed the dining-room was exquisite, the table lovely, the breakfast delicious. We were infatuated with everything and with one another.

Ah, but this morning, things were so changed; everything was wrong, nothing was fit to eat, both Bob and I looked like fury, and were silent and ill-tempered.

We had been talking over our affairs the night before, to see how they stood. We were horrified to find how rapidly the winter's ice had helped us down the hill. That we were on the down grade we well knew, but how near the bottom we had never cared to ascertain. The rapidity with which we had slid down on the ice, had worn our elegant attire so thin that the chilliness and coldness had penetrated to our bodies and brought us to a realizing sense of an uncomfortable position.

We left the table in disgust. I flew to my refuge to nerve myself to face the situation without flinching. The last straw had been broken upon the camel's back.

Our magnificent house and costly contents were to be sold in a week to satisfy the, as we thought, greedy and unreasonable creditors.

I had need of all the strength in my possession, and I wasted none of it in foolish fretting, but shut my teeth hard and tight together, and vowed I would not shed a single tear. (I did, nevertheless.)

I very gravely and soberly looked things over, and took in the whole affair.

I concluded that the virtue vulgarly called "pluck" was all I needed.

The outlook was indeed gloomy, the March winds

lashed the plate-glass in the pretty bay-window of my little room, as it rushed and howled down the street. The weather-lion out-doors did not exceed the restlessness of the angry caged lion in-doors. Bob dashed and tore from room to room, up and down the halls, looking at all our valuables, and swearing, in a perfect rage, that he would not give up this, and he would not give up that.

The roaring of both the animals set me wellnigh distracted.

The week before the sale was one of terror, nearly all the rooms were closed, and we went about as if in a dream. Every noise startled us. The shutting of the door, or the crying of the boy sent a sharp thrill through us. We lived in a tomb. We wandered listlessly and silently about gathering together what few articles were not included in the mortgage.

Bob was inconsolable; he could not bear the idea of living in the small house I had selected. He had searched for a day among the house-renter's list, but not one could he take.

I had found a modest two-story brick, with comparatively few rooms and fewer conveniences, both of which deficiencies were made up with an unusual quantity of other people's dirt. I thought, with a few remnants of our lost grandeur, we could at least be comfortable.

At last the dreaded day arrived with all its horrors. Who but those who have had such an experience can fully comprehend the unspeakable terrors of the first downward move in life.

The memory of the sorrowful day hangs about me like the blood-curdling nightmare.

The wagons drove away from our former palatial mansion, in a drizzling rain, for it always rains on such dreadful occasions.

As the cook and I received the household goods at the new abode, it was difficult to decide which required the most drying, our eyes or the wet furniture.

The good-hearted woman was ready with native sympathy.

"My sowl! it's a burnin' shame to have the illegant furniture desthroyed"—

(It was the very plainest we had from the back part of the house.)

Don't cry, schild—God bless yous—you can live as happy here as in the big house, shure. 'Aven't yous

got your health and your boy, shure, and he will be more comfort to you than all the foine things yous left behind, at all, at all."

Mary's hands were as busy as her tongue, and she worked like a Trojan to put one room in order for the baby, so the "little darlint wouldn't catch his death."

I was at sea. I sat in despair among the desolation and ruin for a whole day. When I saw how entirely forlorn and forsaken Bob looked, I gave up grieving and set to work. Bob was of little use, but did what little he knew how to—which was precious little—

I dived down to the bottom of a trunk, resurrected the oldest dress I possessed, tied my head in a towel and tried what I could do.

Mary and I scrubbed, scoured, cooked, washed dishes, tacked down carpets, polished furniture, arranged closets and drawers, and at the end of two weeks the place looked a little "settled." Order was coming out of chaos, and the result of our work was quite satisfactory. The six rooms had the appearance of what young housekeepers call a "snug, cosy little home." Some of the furniture was very

large for the rooms, and we were compelled to saw the top ornaments off the bedsteads and bureaus to make them suit the ceilings. The carpets, too, did not fit very smoothly in the corners and around the door-casings, and the patterns were very large for the rooms. In some rooms only one complete design was visible. However, we did not notice these defects and we had no visitors to make comments. The table-ware being our kitchen dishes, looked awfully plain and white after our Dresden china. Mary cooked as well in small quantities as she did in large, and we had plenty to do with—the contents of our store-room being the largest item in the move.

After the household affairs were in good running order, we voted the nurse was a superfluity, and Mary added the occupation of attending baby to her many duties.

When everything was complete in detail we rested from our labors and surveyed the whole with sadness and modest pride, and decided "things might have been much worse."

There might possibly be some happiness in a home of six rooms with the appendage of one servant, and where contentment and love reigned supreme. The former we will keep a strong hold upon, and we shall guard the little windows well, to keep the latter from flying out, because poverty has entered through the door, which our own recklessness had set ajar.

### CHAPTER XI.

THE LOOSE THREADS KNOTTED AT THE END.

Bob was too much of a Chicago man to be long idle. After a short rest to recover from the shock of his reverses, he had little difficulty in procuring a situation at two thousand a year. He was thoroughly dissatisfied at the meagreness of the income, and declared it insufficient to furnish us with bread and butter. It did seem like the widow's mite when compared with our former enormous outlay, but by strict economy it would at least keep the wolf from the door. Fashionable dressing was entirely out of the question, and we had little need of fashion's finery. The pew in the high-toned church had been included in the assets. Mr. Poppenjay, the pastor (?), who was one of the most frequent partakers of our generous hospitality, in palmy days, and one of the very best connoisseurs of Bob's wines, had erased our names from his visiting list, and swept us out of the velvet-carpeted and crimson-cushioned house of God, just as he would any other squeezed

lemon, too dry for further use. The good man, who was a faithful servant in the Lord's vineyard, who had charge of the little church struggling for existence in our new neighborhood, received us with open arms. Neither he nor the congregation noticed or cared if our garments were last year's cut, and our hats and bonnets a year old.

Company of any kind troubled us very little, for our five hundred fashionable friends never troubled themselves to ascertain our new address. The wheels of their fine carriages could not be mudded driving up a side street. Consequently only a very few trusted friends, those who had cultivated our society and not our wealth, retained our acquaintance. They cheered us with their visits, and assisted us with their valued advice and experience.

The hotel gossips had not been idle. They had known from the first, that our grand style would end just where it did. They always knew we had "nothing to put on so many airs about, that was the reason they had never visited us. They should not be surprised if we died in the poorhouse yet." Maybe their prediction is true, but fortunately there is no prospect of that yet. We go on in the most modest quiet way.

I experience the tortures of washing and ironing day, and then my mind reverts back to the easy lounge in my rest-giving little pink boudoir, and I wonder if I shall ever have another such a room.

We have concluded we can live just as pleasantly and happily as we ever did in the great house, with a round of gayety and a routine of servants.

Bob does not smoke or have wine, and blacks his own boots. I wear cleaned gloves, a print wrapper in place of a cashmere morning-gown. We read by a student's lamp in place of a gilt drop-light with a painted shade, and find student's lamps very beneficial to the eyes, but terribly damaging to gas bills.

Our silver door-plate was entirely too large for the narrow door of the little house, it was like a "jewel in a swine's nose." Besides, we are not over-anxious to let every passer-by know where we live, so the large door-plate, with elaborate Old English letters, is packed away as a souvenir of better days. It might be like the historic one bearing Thompson spelt with a "p" in possession of the Toodles family. Our son, too, might by chance use it on a prospective residence. However, we shall always cherish it tenderly as a relic of our past grandeur. It was conspicuous as an ornament on the

carved door, which opened to admit us to such a regal home. That same door shut us out from our last valuable worldly possessions.

Poverty is no disgrace, but then it is just a trifle inconvenient; for money is a necessary evil, that is very "handy to have in the house." Nevertheless we know by experience that home is not "merely four square walls, with pictures hung and gilded." We are patiently and cheerfully working and waiting in our six little rooms, until the "hard times' wave" has swept by, and our ship comes in with the tide.

Here we are instilling into our boy's developing mind the principles of modest living and careful prudence, as well as the truthfulness of the proverb, "Economy is wealth," and in the meantime are keeping stout hearts.

"While our ships are sailing,
Sailing over the sea—
Bob's ship and my ship
Full as full can be,
Sailing on the sunny tide,
Grieving would be sin:
Soon or late, and side by side,
Shall our ships come in."

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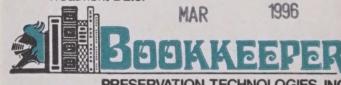
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